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To: Linda Meyer/R10/USEPA/US@EPA

cc:

Subject: Closure of FMS/Astaris waste ponds 17 and 18

11/16/01 12:09 PM

Dear Ms. Meyer:

This is the last day I can comment on the proposed closure of waste ponds 17 and 18 at the FMC/Astaris plant west of Pocatello, and while it probably won't make any difference, I want to register my opinion. Because Astaris will be closing down, you have allowed them to stop construction of the LDR treatment system. I think this is a grave mistake, and that they should be required to build the facility. Not only should the toxic wastes in ponds 17 and 18 be cleaned up, but there are "many other ponds at the facility" (L. John Iani) that will never be cleaned up if the LDR system is not built.

The ground water under this plant is already contaminated with arsenic and heavy metals. The Pilot House restaurant was forced to close across the street because of this. I have heard that the effluent from Pocatello's sewage treatment facility is cleaner than the Portneuf River into which it flows. This greatly disturbs me, because American Falls Reservoir has become the repository of these toxic wastes. During the annual drawdown of the water in the reservoir there are thousands of migratory birds feeding in the mud along the edge. We have counted over 100,000 arctic nesting shorebirds of 31 species, and at least 40,000 White-faced Ibis eating insect larvae along the eastern edge of the reservoir. We have managed to get the Springfield Bottoms to be designated as a Regional Reserve in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. There are regularly between 50 and 60 Bald Eagles wintering on the Fort Hall Bottoms, and I have personally watched three Peregrine Falcons hunting along the edge of the reservoir. It is a wildlife haven out there, but perhaps a toxic one.

As a spokesman for the Portneuf Valley Audubon Society I would like to request that EPA do everything it its power to require FMC/Astaris clean up the toxic pollution they have created. I believe you when you state that capping the ponds will prevent water from leaking into them, but remain unconvinced that there is no leakage of these "many ponds" into the ground water.

Sincerely,

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